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QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Fact Sheet
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What do I do to enroll my child in school for the first time?

If this is the first time your child will be enrolling in any school, call the school and ask what you must bring with you to enroll your child. As a minimum, most schools require the following documents: birth certificate; proof of custody/guardianship (documentation which determines where the child resides and who has decision-making authority); proof of residency; and record of immunizations (DHMH Form 896).

What do I do if my child is transferring from one school to another?

Call the school your child last attended and ask the school to prepare a Maryland Transfer Form (SR7). Tell them the last day your child will attend school and ask if you may pick up the Maryland Transfer Form or if it can be mailed to you or brought home to you by your child. Also, request a copy of your child's grades, immunizations, test scores, and IEP if applicable.

Call your child's new school and schedule an appointment. Be sure to take the Maryland Transfer Form with you. The appointment will ensure that time is set aside to speak with you and to answer any questions you may have. Also, ask what items you need to bring with you to enroll your child in the new school.

Why is proof of custody/guardianship required?

Proof of custody/guardianship is required to identify who is legally responsible for the child and who can be contacted in case of an emergency. This tells the school who can make educational decisions for the child. Each local school system determines which documents will be accepted as proof (i.e., a court order; a separation or divorce decree; or a birth certificate which identifies the parents). Call the school and ask what documents are acceptable.

Why is proof of residency required?

The residence of the parents/legal custodian/guardian determines the child's right to attend the public school. Acceptable proof of residency is established by each local school system. You should call the school where you plan to enroll the child to find out what will be accepted as proof of residency. Generally accepted documents are: current rental lease; current utility bills containing applicant's name and address; or a current property tax bill.

Does this procedure include children in Kinship Care?

These requirements include formal Kinship Care (when a child is removed from his/her family and is placed with a relative by a State child welfare agency) and appropriate documentation is provided as proof of custody/guardianship and proof of residency. If you are informally caring for a relative for extenuating reasons, call the school to share that information and ask the appropriate documents to complete.

Why do I need to bring proof of age?

Proof of age is particularly important the first time a child enrolls in school. It helps determine which services and programs are available to the child. The mandatory attendance law applies to children between the ages of five and 16.

A birth certificate and other documents as determined by each local school system may be used as proof of age. A copy of your documentation will be made by the school and attached to your child's record. Call the school to see what document other than the birth certificate will be accepted as proof of age.

Why do I need to bring immunization records?

All children need to have an up-to-date copy of immunization records to be enrolled in, and to attend, school. If your child's immunizations need to be updated and you can bring written proof of an appointment within 20 days to obtain the immunizations, you may temporarily enroll your child pending receipt of the required immunizations. Your doctor or health clinic can provide the DHMH 896 Form, or a computer-generated form, for you to take to the school.

Why do I need to complete the lead form?

Childhood lead poisoning is a preventable environmental disease. Children exposed to lead can develop physical and behavioral problems as well as learning disabilities. Beginning school year 2003-2004, *all* children enrolled in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade who currently live or have ever lived in targeted zip codes must show evidence of blood lead testing.

To comply with the law, parents/guardians must complete the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Blood Lead Testing Certificate available from your school or doctor. The Blood Lead Testing Certificate requires parents/guardians to:

- Provide the dates of blood lead tests if your child currently lives or has ever lived in any of the targeted zip codes identified on the back of the form, or
- Certify that your child does not live, nor has ever lived, in the zip codes identified on the back of the form.

If your child has never had a blood lead test and needs one, contact your child's doctor or see your school nurse who will assist you in obtaining the required test.

Why do I need to bring the current Individualized Education Program (IEP) for my child who receives Special Education services?

This will ensure that your child receives, at the new school, the appropriate special education services and related services which were specifically developed for your child. It will also provide the school with the dates for the annual IEP review of your child's program as well as any re-evaluations that may be required.

Do I need to bring the most recent report card and/or withdrawal grades?

This information is very helpful in matching a continuing program for your child. It tells the school what courses your child was taking and may indicate the instructional level. For elementary children, it may indicate the reading or math series with which your child was being taught. For high school students, it may indicate credit earned and/or graduation requirements which have been met.
